

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2004-754

December 2, 2004

VERIZON NEW ENGLAND INC. D/B/A
VERIZON MAINE
Request for Approval of
Interconnection Agreement with Southwestern
Bell Communications, Inc. d/b/a SBC
Long Distance

ORDER APPROVING
INTERCONNECTION
AGREEMENT WITH
SOUTHWESTERN BELL
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
D/B/A SBC LONG DISTANCE

WELCH, Chairman; DIAMOND and REISHUS, Commissioners

In this Order, we approve an interconnection agreement between Verizon New England Inc. d/b/a Verizon Maine (Verizon Maine) and Southwestern Bell Communications, Inc. d/b/a SBC Long Distance (SBCS), pursuant to section 252 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

On October 29, 2004, Verizon Maine filed a negotiated interconnection agreement with SBCS, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252, enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Section 252 allows interconnection agreements that provide for interconnection between an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) and another telecommunications carrier, including a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC). It also allows a telecommunications carrier to purchase unbundled network elements or local services at a discounted wholesale rate (the discount reflecting avoided cost), or both, from an ILEC (or CLEC).

The agreement incorporates terms and conditions of a separate interconnection agreement between Verizon New England Inc. Inc. d/b/a Verizon Maine and BullsEye Telecom, Inc., approved by the Commission on September 9, 2003 in Docket No. 2003-590. The agreement also incorporates a Verizon pricing schedule for interconnection agreements in Maine, attached as Appendix A.

SBCS will pay to Verizon Maine the interconnection prices contained in the voluntary agreement that was reached pursuant to arms-length negotiations between the parties. The pricing standards contained in 47 U.S.C. § 252(d) apply only to arbitration proceedings under section 252(b) and not to negotiated agreements under section 252(a). Verizon Maine does not represent that the prices contained in the agreement are consistent with the section 252(d) pricing standards or with any other state or federal policy.

Section 252(e)(2) states that a state commission may reject a negotiated agreement only if it finds that "the agreement (or portion thereof) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement" or if "the implementation of such agreement or portion is not consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity." We received no comments by the comment deadline set in a November 15, 2004 Notice of Agreement and Opportunity to Comment. We do not make either of the

findings set for in section 252(e)(2) for rejection, and we therefore approve the agreement.

We reserve judgment on whether the rates contained in the agreement are reasonable from the perspective of Verizon Maine's retail ratepayers. Verizon Maine is presently under an alternative form of regulation (AFOR) ordered by the Commission in Docket No. 94-123. The AFOR began in December, 1995. Under the AFOR, Verizon Maine bears the risk of lost revenues resulting from rates that are too low. In Docket No. 99-851, we have continued the AFOR until May 31, 2006. We do not resolve whether Verizon Maine is receiving reasonable compensation from any CLECs that may avail themselves of the rates provided to SBCS pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252(i).

On November 23, 2004, in Docket No. 2004-644, the Commission granted authority to SBCS to provide local exchange telecommunications services in Maine.

The agreement filed by Verizon Maine provides for interconnection between SBCS and Verizon Maine's network in Maine. If SBCS seeks to interconnect with networks maintained by other incumbent local exchange carriers in Maine, it must seek a termination, suspension, or modification of the exemption contained in 47 U.S.C. 251(f)(1)(A).

ORDERING PARAGRAPHS

Accordingly, we

1. Approve the Interconnection Agreement between Verizon New England Inc. d/b/a Verizon Maine and Southwestern Bell Communications, Inc. d/b/a SBC Long Distance, attached hereto, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252(e); and
2. Order that the Administrative Director shall make a copy of the attached Agreement available for public inspection and copying pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 252(h) within 10 days of the date of this Order.

Dated at Augusta, Maine this 2nd day of December, 2004.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
 Diamond
 Reishus

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within **21 days** of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.